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BROMYARD RURAL DISTRICT

Herefordshire



A N N U A L R E P O R T

on the
State of the Public Health
for the year 1953



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Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health.

I.F. MACKENZIE, M.D.(Edin), D.P.H.,
D.T.M. & H.,

Sanitary Inspector.

N.E. WORSDALL, M.S.I.A.,

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Annual Report for 1953 is presented herewith.

Measles continued to be prevalent throughout the district during the first half of the year and two hundred and twenty-nine cases were notified. About half were in the five years to nine years age group. In general the illness was mild.

The twenty-seven cases of Scarlet Fever reported include the nine that occurred in the localised outbreak at Bredenbury. This outbreak was found to have been due to carriers among the school-children. Active measures brought the situation rapidly under control. The other cases were sporadic instances of the disease, which must be regarded as unavoidable in modern communities having well developed transport services which enable healthy carriers to convey the germ rapidly from place to place.

A reduction by four - from 58 to 54 - in the total of established cases of Tuberculosis in the district is recorded this year. There were only four new cases notified in the twelve months as against seventeen in 1952; but it would be inadvisable to draw any inference regarding the probable future trend in the prevalence of this disease in the district from that or from the reduced total on the register. In general, throughout England and Wales an increasing number of notifications ~~are~~ being received as new cases are discovered by the Tuberculosis Service but the death rate is falling, partly through the use of more efficient methods of treatment.

Your Sanitary Inspector and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the keen interest taken by members in all matters affecting the health of the district, and for the encouragement given to us in our work throughout the year.

I.F. MACKENZIE.

Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Office : 4, Church Street, Leominster.
Telephone No. Leominster 95.

SECTION A - STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (in acres)	61,114
Population	7,055
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1953) according to the Rate Books)	..	2,335
Rateable Value	£18,866
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£78. Os. 1d.

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

		Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	116	55	61	
(Illegitimate)	5	1	4	
Total	121	56	65	
STILL BIRTHS	Nil			
DEATHS	95	64	31	
DEATHS FROM Puerperal Causes	Nil			
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate)	1	1	-	

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1953.

Birth Rate (per 1,000 estimated mid-year home population) ..	17.2
Birth Rate for England and Wales	15.5
Still Birth Rate (per 1,000 estimated mid-year home population) Nil	
Still Birth Rate for England and Wales	0.35
Death Rate (per 1,000 estimated mid-year home population) ..	13.5
Death Rate for England and Wales	11.4
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 related live births) ..	8.3
Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales	26.8

I am indebted to Mr. N.E. Worsdall, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following statement - Sections B, C & D.

SECTION B

WATER SUPPLIES

95 samples of water were taken for bacteriological or chemical examination with following results:-

Council Owned Supplies	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Bacteriological	11	10	21
Chemical	1	2	3
Private Supplies			
Bacteriological	22	48	70
Chemical	1	-	1
Total	35	60	95

Many of the private samples were taken at the request of farmers seeking Ministry of Agriculture grant.

Houses with water laid on inside the house Dec. 1952 -	902
Existing houses to which water has been made available inside the house during the year.	- 12
New houses provided during the year with approved water supply.	- 50
Total number of dwellings with water laid to the house.	- 964
Houses with no water supply within the house.	1379
Total housing units, 1953.	<u>2343</u>

The schemes for Whitbourne and Cradley mentioned in last year's report were finally shelved during the year, the Council turning their attention to a scheme capable of serving the whole area. Further difficulties occasioned by boreholes failing to deliver adequate water - especially at Fromes Hill housing site - served to underline the Geologist's advice that substantial supplies of underground water were not available in North Herefordshire. On the other hand the two most important springs - Whitbourne and Calder were known to provide insufficient water for a comprehensive scheme.

Practically the whole of 1953 was devoted to considering the relative merits of the Teme and Martley R.D.C. schemes. After the most careful deliberations the Council came to the conclusion that the Martley proposal was too expensive and instructions were given to the Consulting Engineers to proceed with a comprehensive scheme taking water from the River Teme. From time to time interest was centred around the idea of a County Water Board; although Bromyard R.D.C. declared themselves in favour, most other Herefordshire Local Authorities were unable to agree.

Above all else the financial implications of a scheme, the capital cost of which exceeds £500,000, are bound to weigh heavily where the product of a penny rate is so meagre. Government grants are available but their size cannot be determined until planning has reached its final stages; in the meanwhile considerable Engineer's fees will have been incurred.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

A few existing private houses were provided with modern facilities, some with assistance under Housing Act 1949 but one feels that progress is retarded by the absence of piped water supplies.

The sewage disposal plants at Council House sites demand regular attention, weekly visits being paid to the larger installations. Certain plants have required repair and/or alteration. There is also the important question of maintaining outfall ditches which quickly become foul unless attended to at regular intervals. A long standing complaint of smell at Bishops Frome village was overcome by the insertion of properly trapped road gullies.

Attention was directed to provision of modern sanitation on licensed premises and one Inn was completely modernised during the year.

No. of houses with water bourne sanitation	-	659
" " " dry sanitation	-	1684
" " " known to have no drainage system	-	556

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Although collection is kerb-side and takes place once monthly, it is pleasing to report excellent work on the part of the Contractor.

	<u>Total per Annum</u>	<u>Average per month</u>
No. of properties visited for purpose of collecting refuse	16675	1389
Mileage covered	5560	463
Lorry loads collected	172	14.3

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

One of the Council's workmen spends one week in three on rodent control. The time is devoted to (i) treating Council properties (ii) treating private properties where necessary (iii) inspecting food premises and (iv) survey of farm premises, in that order of priority.

HOP PICKERS LODGING ACCOMMODATION

There are now 75 hop growing farms in the District and of these 17 employ local pickers. Twelve machines were used in 1953.

All premises housing pickers and some employing local labour were visited at least once before and during the season. It was generally agreed the number of pickers living on farms was again lower and their standard of behaviour higher.

No cases of infectious disease occurred. A limited number of defects were brought to notice of farmers.

SECTION C - HOUSING

At 31st December 1953 the Council owned 142 dwellings with 26 under construction at Bishops Frome :-

Avenbury	2	Cradley	28
Evesbatch	4	Fromes Hill	23
Grendon Bishop	10	Linton	8
Much Cowarne	10	Pencombe	6
Stanford Bishop	6	Stoke Lacy	14
Ullingswick	9	Tedstone Delamere	6
Upper Sapey	6	Whitbourne	8
Wolferlow	2		
		Total	142

Houses at Cricks Green were provided with borehole water.

Expenses on repairs, general maintenance and repainting began to be felt and it will be necessary to review the Housing Repairs account at regular intervals. Official circles put cost of normal house repairs at three times pre-war figure.

Number of new houses completed during 1953 :-

Council Dwellings	31
Private	"
	9

Statutory Notices under Housing Act 1939 Section 11 were served in respect of one dwelling and in this instance an undertaking not to relet was accepted.

Many enquiries concerning Improvement Grants were made and in most cases the property concerned was visited. Some owners were informed unofficially that their properties could not qualify and of the remainder, 9 applications were approved. Five schemes involving 5 dwellings were completed in 1953.

SECTION D - INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supplies

No. of retailers licensed to retail T.T. ..	2
" " " " " Sterilised	1
" " " " " Pasteurised	3
" " samples taken for biological examination	5
" " above samples found to be positive	Nil
" " samples taken for keeping quality tests	2
" " above samples subject to unsatisfactory reports	Nil
" " visits occasioned by milk duties	41

Following information received from a large dairy outside the county that milk from a producer-retailer in this area had been found to be infected with bovine tuberculosis, investigations were carried out and action was taken to prevent further supplies being retailed in the raw state until the affected cow had been discovered and removed.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1938

Inspections of food preparing and retailing premises were carried out as and when time permitted. The Council set a high standard and a good example, by the erection of a general store on the Fromes Hill Housing Estate and were closely followed at an Inn in the same neighbourhood.

It is worthy of note that certain voluntary organisations such as the W.V.S. showed signs of an active interest in the clean food campaign.

No. of premises registered for the sale of ice cream: 12

SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS

Number of licensed slaughtermen: 8

Action was taken during the year to secure that all privately owned pigs were slaughtered with a humane killer. Subsequently this became compulsory.

SECTION E - PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

ANALYSES OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES ACCORDING TO AGE

Disease	Age of Patient								TOTAL
	0-1	1-2	3-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25 & Over	Unknown	
Scarlet Fever	1	2	8	14	1	1	-	-	27
Whooping Cough	3	11	10	22	3	-	1	-	50
Measles	3	33	53	107	24	3	6	-	229
Pneumonia	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	6
Dysentery	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1953 the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of thirty males and twenty-four females who normally reside within the district.

During the year four new cases were notified, all on account of pulmonary tuberculosis. During the same period four persons suffering from tuberculosis left the district and four recovered.

SECTION F - DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The following figures are presented through information supplied by the County Medical Officer:-

Number of children who were primarily immunised against diphtheria in the 12 months ended 31st December, 1953, and those who were given a reinforcing injection :-

Age at date of final injection.				Reinforcing injections.
Under 1	1-4	5-14	Total	
26	42	19	87	153



